10: Hilger E-5 (1946-1952) 1957
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Chile



fluids were injected into eggs through tiny punctures made in the shells, and the punctures were then sealed with the root of a plant. If no black spots appeared in the yolk or albumen after the three days, it was safe to eat them. 754

In Boroa area, a plant called cicuta mayor was used in poisoning persons. In Panguipulli area, either the fluids or the powdered dried viscera of a poisonous toad were used. A teacher in the area told of a clique of girls who admitted that they were planning to extract such poison from a toad to bring sickness upon a classmate who persisted in doing the best schoolwork. A non-Araucanian who had spent more than 50 years in the area told that along the beach of Panguipulli Lake one can sometimes see a heap of legs, skins, and heads of frogs in one place. "Sometimes there will be quantities of these in one spot," he said; "it is a sign that a Mapuche has made preparations to poison another." The viscera, the informant knew, were dehydrated and ground to a fine powder. 754 298

Since all sickness is the result of the ill will of another, the best preventive of ill health is to maintain the good will of all. However, once sickness has come upon someone, it can be prevented from afflicting others in the family by hiring a machi to chase the spirit of sickness from the locality. Two ways of doing this were mentioned: In one, the father of the sick person offers a sheep as sacrifice. The machi kills it and sprinkles its blood inside the ruka and in the yard surrounding it; this makes it intolerable for the spirit of sickness to stay there, and it will leave of its own accord. In another way, the machi drives the spirit of sickness, which he has just released from a sick person, away from the area. The machi orders all persons present to make a great deal of noise. Then the machi grasps a firebrand from the fireplace and swirls it in circles around the place, and orders others present to do likewise. After all have swung their firebrands for a while, the machi walks rapidly toward some water, "like a creek or river or lake," and all follow, each one brandishing his firebrand. This chases the spirit of sickness across the water, and a spirit thus chased across water cannot return; one not chased across water may possibly return at a later time. 755

Several women who had been employed as domestics in non-Araucanian homes had learned prevention by noncontamination. "If I had tuberculosis," said one, "I would keep my plate and yerba maté bambillo apart and would not let my children use them." There was probably little done to strengthen a child's physique as a preventive of ill health, except for the baby's cold baths, previously mentioned (pp. 20-21). "At least I have never heard anyone say so. I am 751

10: Hilger E-5 (1946-1952) 1957
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751 certain that no boy or girl was thrown into cold water or made to run races to do so, as you say some indigenas did."

### THE KALKU, THE MACHI

754 Individuals are not only suspected of being kalku, but an occasional one is openly accused of being one. However, no one has positive proof that any particular person is a kalku. A kalku always does harm; never does he bring about a cure. He not only brings about sickness and death, but also harms property (cf. pp. 154-156). He works unbeknown to anyone but himself or his fellow kalku. He is spoken of with disrespect, and it is hoped that vengeance will come down upon his head. It is not known how kalku are trained in their black art, "but I think there are old ones around here, and they teach younger members in their own families." Kalku are of both sexes; so are machi.

756 Being a machi is a profession. Machi women (pls. 29, *1*; 30, *1*) who came under my observation (no machi men were seen) had an air of self-confidence and self-importance; they were decidedly different in their demeanor from other women. During conversation there were frequent gesticulations such as raising the hands to the level of [201] the face and bringing finger tips together—gestures also used during the machitun. Other Araucanian women were calm and quiet when talking. In general, when a machi arrived where a group had gathered, as at a fiesta, the conduct of others become inhibited; and "no one ever talks about the machi for fear harm will come to him. If a machi comes to a house, a good meal is prepared for him, or her, and as much respect is shown him as though he were a Chilean governor. A machi never does any work. It fills one with fear to watch a machi in action."

The profession of a machi is followed either of one's own volition, or because parents urge it upon a child as its life's work, or, most often, because of a compulsive dream. One machi had had a dream in which he was near a waterfall. Here he was decorated with copihue, a sign that he should be a machi; and a certain song came to him—one that he has since used. When he awakened, he announced that he would make a machi of himself. A woman machi when young had been told in a dream by a former machi to replace him, and then a name came to her—"the kind of name that no one but a machi can use."

The following was told by an old man to a high-school student as the dream that compelled her to become a machi:

In my dream I saw two beings, sent by chau (God), descending from heaven to earth. I did not know them, but I had no fear of them; they appeared to be

10: Hilger E-5 (1946-1952) 1957
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Kolupan, "and then notice that she had a little one. Or a man might kill a guanaco, and then see its little orphaned offspring. Such a little animal was taken home and there raised by the children. It became their pet. It might walk away from home, some distance into the open country, but it would always return to the children." Today, an occasional child has a pet animal, such as a kitten, cat, dog, or chicken (pl. 63, *z*).

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### SWIMMING, HORSEBACK RIDING

In the early days all children learned to swim; at present, in general, only boys do so. At the time of my visit, 70-year-old women swam, but their 20-year-old granddaughters did not know how. All children in the early days rode horseback, and many do so today.

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## HEALTH

### PREVENTIVES OF ILL HEALTH; CAUSES OF ILL HEALTH, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

Children, it was believed, would develop robust bodies if they were breast fed, always bathed in cold water, made to go without food in the early part of the day, given much raw meat to eat, and made to walk barefoot. "My father was brought up that way; he lived to be 130 years old and was never sick at any time in his life. How our young Araucanians of today will keep well is difficult to say; they are given coffee with milk early in the morning, and marmalade, too! And no raw meat!" Both Araucanians and non-Araucanians spoke of Araucanians older than 100 years who had never been sick. "At present my eyes bother me; they feel sore," said an informant older than 100 years. She maintained her own house, cooked her own meals, kept chickens, and spun yarn, "but I cannot weave any more; my arms get too tired now when I weave." Deep wrinkles crisscrossed her face; her hair was slightly gray, and she had lost most of her teeth.

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Causes of ill health lay in sorcery. Quoting Kolupan: "When sickness comes upon you, someone has done you harm; witches (kalku) have done it. There are always a few persons around that have the powers of witchcraft. They either put poison into your food, or, when they are not where the food is, they do harm from a distance. If an antidote can be obtained early, you can get well again; if not, you will have to die. Most herbalists and machis know which plants to use or what to do as an antidote." He then told the following as an example of how the cause of sickness could be discovered: "This happened when I was a child. Olul, someone whom no one ever saw

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12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche



75 time, during which the *machi* is in some danger from the *kalku*. Upon agreeing to conduct a *kalkutun*, the *machi* requests the
75 victim's family to bring saliva, eyebrows, finger- and toenail
787 parings, and head hairs which have been saved by them for this purpose. The *machi* is entrusted with these items for a year. After the year has passed, these objects begin to "speak" to her of the cause of death. The *machi* calls the victim's family around her to listen to these objects. Those present are able to understand only a small part of what the objects are saying. In the course of her performance, the *machi* reveals, through the objects, the *kalku* who is responsible for the victim's death, and
[683] also suggests the proper manner of killing the *kalku*. This is as far as the *machi* goes, unless she is one of the rare ones willing to undertake the supernatural murder of the witch. In any case, the family returns home armed only with the *kalku*'s general (and stereotyped) description and notice of her general whereabouts, for the *machi* does not furnish the *kalku*'s name or that of the *kalku*'s client.

754 It is up to the family to take further action against the witch
683 or her client if they choose. Seizure and burning was the traditional manner in which *kalku* were disposed of in the past, but the Chilean police force has put an end to that. The witch-burning tales told by informants do not relate their own experiences, usually, but those of their fathers and grandfathers. When direct action is taken against a witch today, the family of the victim does so by hiring the services of another *kalku* to practice counter magic. However, this action has drawbacks. *Kalku* are rather prone to loyalty to one another, for one thing, and it might be difficult to find a professional witch who admits to being a powerful *kalku*. Should a *kalku* be approached and then refuse to lend assistance, the would-be client considers himself in some danger. *Kalku* are available for doing harm to ordinary people, but usually balk at combatting one of the sisterhood.

751 *Machi* performances themselves are dangerous to participants and spectators, since anyone connected with the manipulation of spirits is considered exposed to supernatural danger. There are somewhat effective safeguards that people may employ, which at least limit or reduce supernatural danger. Recently,

12: Faron E-4, 5 (1952-1954) 1964
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some Mapuche have taken to nailing small crosses over their doors to this end. A traditional means of warding off danger is the wearing of amulets, a practice which nowadays is mostly confined to women who have small silver figurines appended to their *trapelakucha* or other silver ornaments worn on their bosom.

*Machi* are regarded as powerful, awesome persons in any community or region. Where they are lacking, people complain that their plight in the face of illness is very grave and they frequently manifest a good deal of insecurity during hard times—when food is in short supply or when there have been several unexplained deaths on the reservation. They complain that they have no one to turn to; that there are obviously many *wekufe* lurking about and no *machi* to deal with them. Under these circumstances, it is not unusual for an ailing person, in the company of a relative or two, to travel a considerable distance to have a *machitun* performed, or to send someone to bring back a *machi* to the reservation, if one is willing to make the journey. This feeling of insecurity was particularly impressed upon me in a snow-bound reservation in the Andes, during a period of near famine and general anxiety. Roads were in deep snow and almost impassible. No *machi* would make the trip from the nearest reservation which, in this remote area, was two or three days' journey by foot, and which was in dire straits itself. The people did not have the wherewithal to hold a *ñillatun* and, at any rate, some felt that a *ñillatun* held out of season would not be effective.

By Mapuche standards, *machi* are often well-to-do. Their wealth is measured in moveable goods for the most part, goods received in payment for services rendered. This usually means that they live in well-constructed houses and that they have many animals in their corrals. There seems to be no correlation between a *machi*'s wealth, however, and the land she or her husband owns (or has use-rights in), as is expectable, given the Mapuche reservation system and patrilineal inheritance pattern, and the fact that *machi* seem to marry outside the matrilateral pattern. But shamans usually have a well-stocked larder, which is common knowledge. Partly in jest, an ample matronly woman might be pointed out as a *machi*, because of the image of